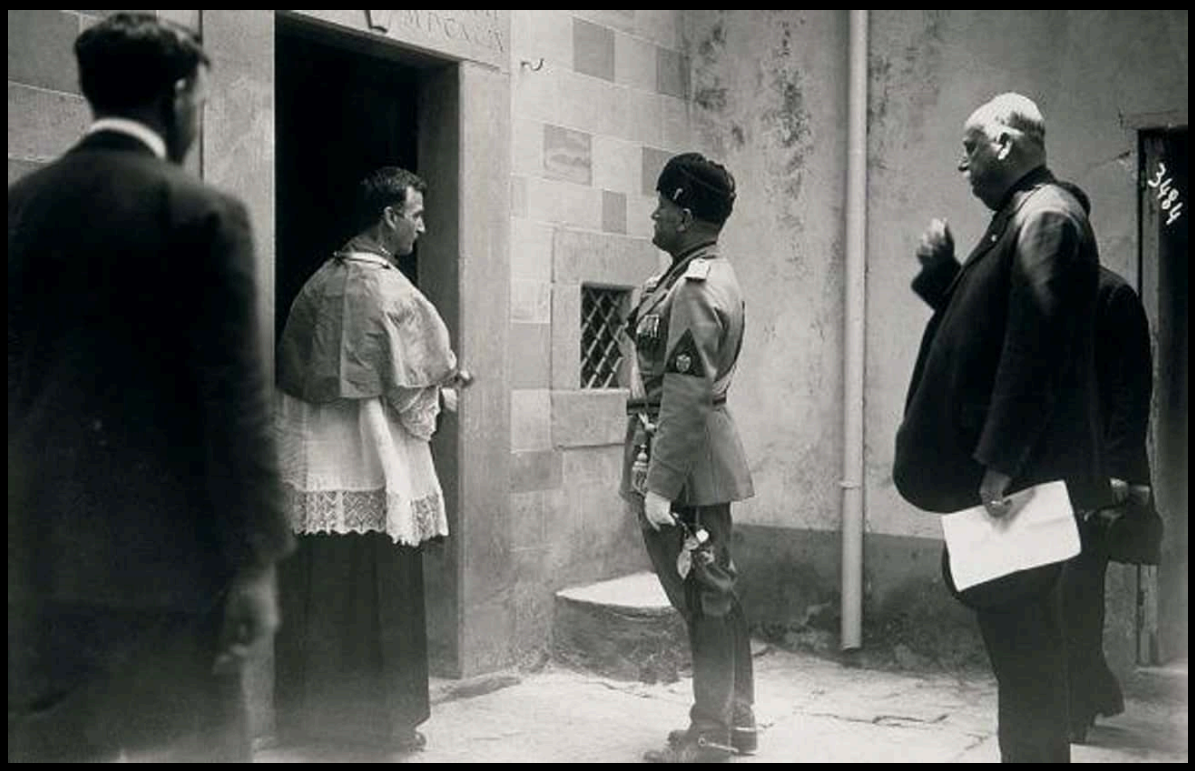
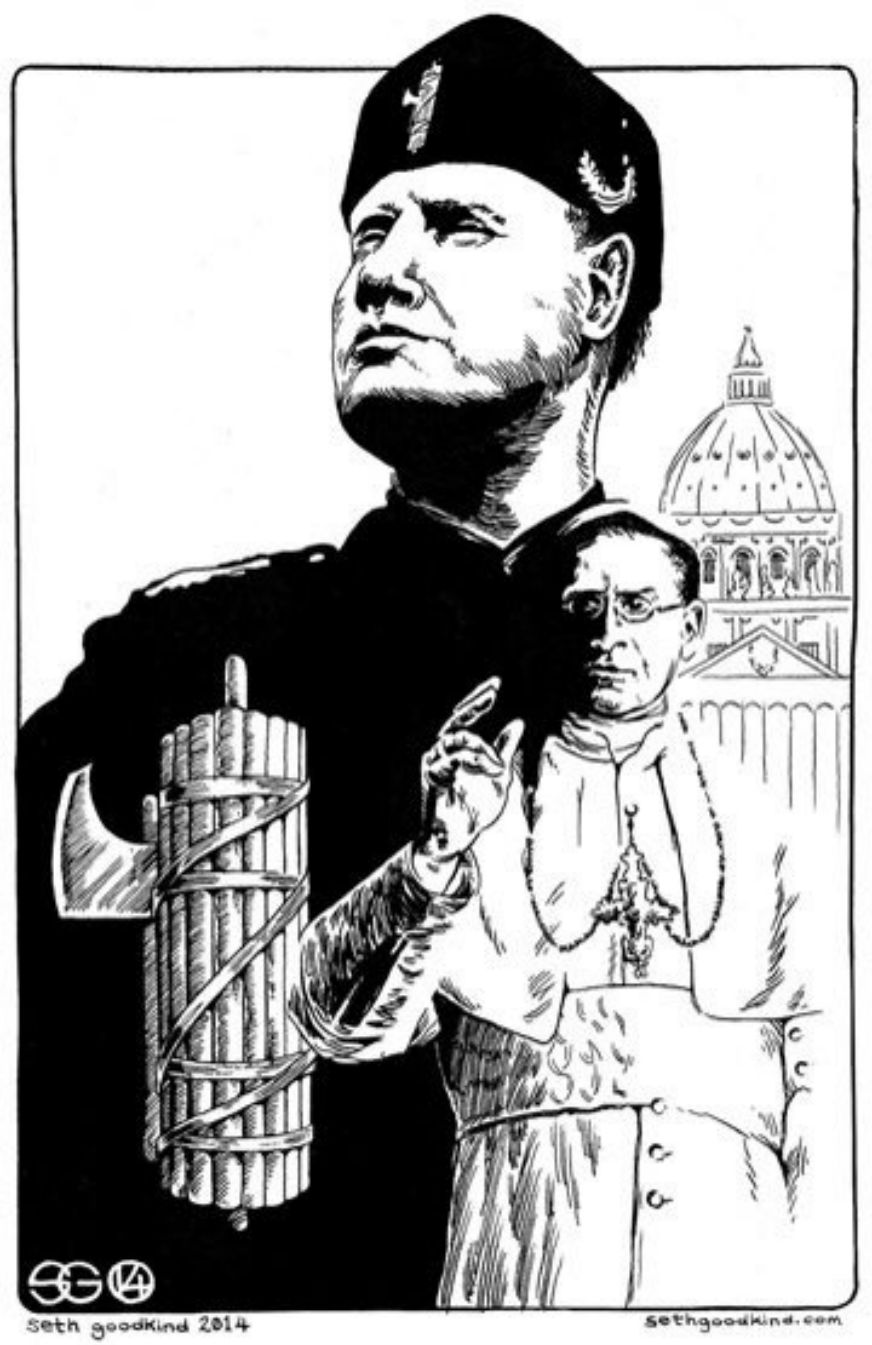
On Non Abbiamo Bisogno
(The "Condemnation" of Fascism)



By Mendel

A Kreuzfahrer Publication

One of the main objections many Catholics raise against adopting Fascism and pairing it with the faith is the encyclical “Non Abbiamo Bisogno” which is often cited as an explicit condemnation of fascism as “Pagan worship of the State”. Let’s examine what the Encyclical really says instead of Wikipedia and Left-Caths have to say.



“Pagan Statolatry”

A Priest celebrates Holy Mass before a portrait of Il Duce

One of the buzzwords catholic opponents of fascism will use is that it is “Pagan” and “Statolatry” in addition to the ambiguous and ill-defined “Pagan Worship of the State”

Funnily enough, the word “Pagan” is only mentioned twice in the encyclical in the 4th and 50th paragraphs.

“4. And here We find Ourselves confronted by a mass of authentic affirmations and no less authentic facts which reveal beyond the slightest possibility of doubt the resolve (already in great measure actually put into effect) to monopolize completely the young, from their tenderest years up to manhood and womanhood, for the exclusive advantage of a party and of a regime based on an ideology which clearly resolves itself into a true, a real pagan worship of the State - the "Statolatry" which is no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in

contradiction with the supernatural rights of the Church. To propose and to promote such a monopoly to persecute for this reason Catholic Action, as has been done for some time more or less openly or under cover to reach this end by striking at the Catholic Association of Youth as has lately been done; all this is truly and literally to "forbid the little children to go to Jesus Christ," since it impedes their access to His Church and where His Church is, there is Jesus Christ. This usurpation goes so far as to snatch the young from Christ and His Church even with violence.

. . . .

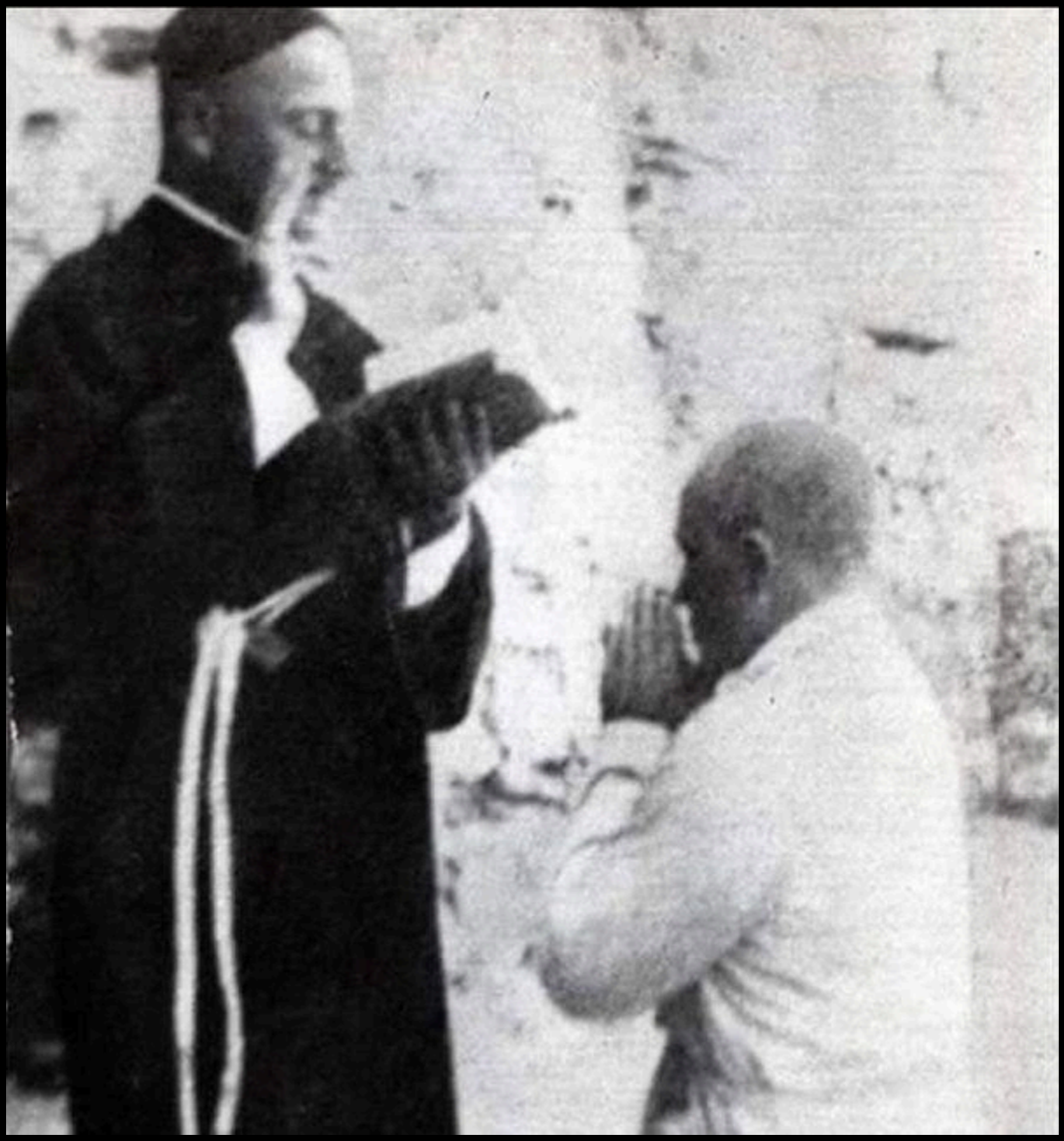
50. You know, Venerable Brethren, Bishops of Italy, from your pastoral experience that it is a grave and disastrous error to believe and to make believe that the work of the Church done by Catholic Action and through Catholic Action is superseded and made superfluous by the religious instruction given in the schools and by the presence of chaplains in the Associations of Youth of the [Fascist] party and of the regime. Both are certainly necessary. Without them the schools and the Associations would inevitably and quickly become, by logical and psychological necessity, pagan things. Necessary therefore they are; but they are not sufficient. As a matter of fact, by such religious instruction and such ecclesiastical assistance from the chaplains, the Church of Jesus Christ can develop only a minimum of her spiritual and supernatural effectiveness, and even this minimum is attained amid surroundings and in an environment which do not depend on the Church but are preoccupied by many other kinds of teaching matters and by many other exercises in obedience to immediate superiors who are often little or not at all favourably disposed to religion, and who sometimes exercise a directly contrary influence both by their words and by the example of their lives.”

So we can essentially see here that this encyclical is warning of the Fascist regime devolving into being centered solely around the state. It also oddly proclaims that the religious instruction and the presence of Catholic Chaplains in the Fascist youth organizations simply isn’t sufficient enough. I find the language of this portion of the encyclical to be a bit ambiguous and vague, especially in use of “Pagan” and “Statolatry”, in that it simply warns against the dissolution Catholic Action, despite

the fact that the youth groups in the Fascist Party had the presence of the Church and Priests.

Classrooms in Fascist Italy, note that their walls are adorned with Crucifixes

Was it a Condemnation?



Mussolini receives a blessing from a Priest, oddly enough this photograph was taken years after the so called “condemnation”

Those who point to Non Abbiamo Bisogno as a condemnation of Fascism, have obviously not even read that the encyclical says within it that it does not wish to be a letter of condemnation of the regime and of the ideals of fascism.

“62. In everything that We have said up to the present, We have not said that We wished to condemn the [Fascist] party as such. Our aim has been to point out and to condemn all those things in the programme and in the activities of the party which have been found to be contrary to Catholic doctrine and Catholic practice, and therefore irreconcilable with the Catholic name and profession. And in doing this We have fulfilled a precise duty of Our episcopal ministry towards Our dear sons who are members of the party, so that their conscience may be at peace.

63. We believe then that We have thus, at the same time, accomplished a good work for the party itself. What interest and success can the party gain, in a Catholic country like Italy, through retaining in its programme ideas, maxims, and practices which cannot be reconciled with a Catholic conscience? The consciences of peoples, as of individuals, come home again in the long run and seek the paths which, for a short time or a long, have been lost from sight or have been abandoned.

64. And lest it be alleged that "Italy is Catholic but anti-clerical," We will say something on this point. You, Venerable Brethren, who in the great and small Italian dioceses live in continuous contact with the good folk of all the country, you know and you see every day how (except when somebody deceives or misleads them) they are far removed from all anticlericalism.”

Paragraph 62 specifically states that this encyclical is NOT a condemnation of Fascism or the Fascist Party, but a letter of condemnation of what the encyclical determines in the party to be contrary to the Catholic Social Doctrine, mainly, the disbandment of “Catholic Action”. The encyclical goes so far as to say that the Party’s practices, maxims, and ideas can and should be reconciled totally with the catholic conscious. In the last paragraph, it even denies anti-clerical activities taking place in Italy, and that it is far removed from Anticlericalism.

An excerpt from a Brazilian Integralist website similarly surmises my immediate conclusion that this Encyclical was not in-fact a condemnation of Fascism and it's ideals.

Brazilian Integralists pose with a Priest who is also a member of their party.

"A Non abbiamo it is a circular on Italian fascism. According to some elements of Catholicism, it translates a general condemnation of doctrines in some way similar to fascism, in aspects such as nationalism, the doctrine of the corporate state, traditional conservatism, etc.

Checking what is its content, however, we give the following structure: first, a pronouncement contrary to the closure of the Italian Catholic Action in 1928, which followed direct attacks, physical and moral, of militants and fascist journals. Starting from this, Pope Pius XI takes an approach to the monopoly of youth and education by the fascist state, erected on a pagan idolatry in which S. S.

denominates “statolatry”, contrary to the natural rights of the family and supernatural of the Church.

This the core of Non abbiamo, practical and political letter. This is not even a contradiction to the “national youth”, militian, later textually approved in the Mit Brennender Sorge, but only to the monopoly which the State has made of them, excluding the family and the Church, and promoting pagan idolatry. Nor is it even a condemnation of the exact ideal of the National Fascist Party, about which it says between paragraphs 62 and 64: “ in all that we have said so far, We express no desire to condemn the Fascist Party as such. Our goal has been to score and condemn them all those things in the Party's program and activities that are contrary to Catholic doctrine and Catholic practice, and therefore irreconcilable with the Catholic profession. In doing so, We fulfill a precise duty of Our episcopal ministry to Our dear children who are members of the party, so that their conscience is at peace. And we believe that we have done a good job for the Party itself ”. It is not, therefore, an attack on nationalism adopted by fascism, its corporate state or other doctrinal aspects that may resemble Integralism, that is, in block. In fact, none of these guidelines comes into question in the aforementioned encyclical. Condemnation should be sought in the specific items of “ all those things ... contrary to Catholic doctrine and Catholic practice ”, pointed out individually.”

Non Abbiamo Bisogno is a letter of warning because of the dissolution of Catholic Action youth organization, but it is NOT a condemnation of the Fascist State or the Fascist Worldview. Many Priests and Prelates at the time were deeply involved in some of the Fascist organizations, including the youth groups.

The Encyclical however fails in that it claims that this sort of move to have one national youth organization is somehow “Pagan” and “Worship of the state”. Again, it’s use of the words “Pagan” and “Statolatry” are ambiguous, vague, and confusing, perhaps made deliberately so. Neopaganism was almost nonexistent in Fascist Italy as far as I am aware, so it was referring to mainly to the Fascist regime shutting down Catholic Action and fearing that the regime would devolve into worship of the state (which it didn’t, the Church always remained the official religion of the state).

We also never hear about how this encyclical was received in Italy at the time, and of the reaction it caused members of the Church and the Fascist regime to invoke, most likely because this encyclical was a WARNING of excesses, not an actual condemnation of Fascism. It was a primary of instructions and guidance and warning for the Duce to ensure that his nation did not devolve in “Pagan Statolatry”, which it never did.

While the English Wikipedia misleadingly claims the encyclical condemned Fascism, the Italian Wikipedia says it wasn’t a condemnation of fascism and even praised aspects of the regime, as I have pointed out in paragraphs of the encyclical in addition to the brazilian integralist source.

He explains that although the Holy See had not hitherto pronounced « formal and explicit condemnations » and had continued to « believe possible and favor compatibility and cooperation which to others seemed inadmissible», the persecution of Catholic Action, defined as « as much as the Church and its Head have more expensive and precious », takes away any possibility of cooperation.

In particular Pius XI clarifies that there is no total condemnation of fascism, but only a criticism of the specific policies that were judged as non-Catholic, for the benefit of Catholics in the fascist party and of fascism itself:

> « We intended to report and condemn what in the program and in their action we have seen and found contrary to Catholic doctrine and practice, and therefore irreconcilable with the name and profession of Catholics. And with this we have fulfilled a precise duty of the Apostolic Ministry towards all our children who belong to the party, so that they can provide for their conscience as Catholics.
>
> We also believe that we have done good work at the party itself and the regime at the same time. »

Responding to the accusations of «ingratitude» launched by the regime towards the Church, the encyclical responds by recalling instead that the Italian state has benefited rather from the credit paid to fascism by the Holy See:

> « Il Clergy, the'episcopate, and this same Holy See they have never denied what has been done in all these years with the benefit and advantage of Religion; indeed they have often expressed their sincere and sincere gratitude. But [...] the attacks on Catholic Action [...] which culminated in the police measures against them consumed seriously doubt whether the previously benevolent and beneficial attitudes came only from sincere love and zeal of Religion. For if we want to speak of ingratitude, it was and remains that used towards the Holy See by a party and a regime which, in the judgment of the whole world, drew from friendly relations with the Holy See, in the country and outside, an increase in prestige and credit, which to some in Italy and abroad seemed excessive, how too broad the favor is too broad the trust on our part [of the pope]. »

All of this taken into consideration, it leads me to question what actions led up to the encyclical and why the fascist regime took it upon itself to dissolve “Catholic Action”. We also need to examine who had ghost-written the encyclical, because encyclicals are almost always ghost-written by other prelates and clergy. We must also consider that Pope Pius XI may not have been aware of what was fully going on in Catholic Action, as all of his reports were coming from Church sources, but they did not speak of the odd phenomena of leftists posing as Catholics.

On Catholic Action

There is a potential explanation as to why the Catholic Action organization was dissolved, which it was previously guarantied a protected status in the Lateran Treaty and Concordat. I suspect and theorize that it was because it was the only non-fascist organization that was not dissolved within Italy after the Lateran Treaty and Concordat, where the “catholic” leftists of previous political parties flocked to and attempted to utilize it as a political vessel of resistance and agitation, rather than focusing on purely spiritual activities.

We have an article from the successor regime of Mussolini in the Salo Republic (Italian Social Republic) that speaks of this odd phenomena of leftist “Communist Catholics”. It even brings reference of an incident of a Communist Agitator being arrested by the Vatican Gendarme at an outdoor blessing and later being released as he turned out to be a Catholic Priest.

“As you know, this movement, which arose during the most turbid waters of Italian life, had its first public demonstration in St. Peter's Square, when an individual wearing clerical garb raised a red rag during the Papal blessing. A harmless scuffle ensued, during which a pontifical gendarme seized the priest, who was justly believed to be an impostor, and took him to jail. But what happened next was surprising: the priest turned out to be a real priest, which is why he was released and absolved.

The incident led to a discussion about so-called "Catholic Communism", two separate ideologies which are the antithesis of each other—or at least are supposed to be the antithesis of each other according to the dictates of the Church, solemnly confirmed by Pope Pius XI in his memorable encyclical.

There was some officious clarification, which logically should have led to the defeat of "Catholic Communism", but in reality there was nothing that could even resemble an outward defeat of that movement. Everything was resolved with an act of pure form: the Catholic Communists merely changed their name to "Christian Left" and, as such, they have now experienced a rechristening in the hodgepodge of parties, currents and ideas that all together constitute the moral and political chaos of "Liberated" Italy under the rule of the Jews, Freemasons and godless atheists under Anglican patronage, all of whom are—without exception—the traditional and irreducible enemies of the Church of Rome."

(From Left Wing Christians)

So we can see clearly that after these "Catholic Communists" were condemned, as this article points out, these "Catholics" started to go under a new name and association of "Christian Left".

Catholic Action, oddly enough, was an entity that had previously been reconciled with the state before it's dissolution. Upon closer examination, we see that according to the Wikipedia Article on "Catholic Action" that it was an umbrella term used to describe a variety of catholic organizations. We see that multiple socially LEFTIST and ANTIFASCIST organizations fell under the umbrella of "Catholic Action" focused on nonsensical ideas such as Ecumenism, Democracy, and opposing racial segregation (segregation is not contrary to Catholic teaching so long as it provides separate but equal facilities).

History [edit]

The Catholic Action movement has its beginnings in the latter part of the 19th century as efforts to counteract a rise in anti-clerical sentiment, especially in Europe.[3]

A variety of diverse groups formed under the concept of Catholic Action. These include the Young Christian Workers, the Young Christian Students; the Cursillo movement, RENEW International; the Legion of Mary; Sodalities; the Christian Family Movement; various community organizing groups like COPS (Communities Organized for Public Service) in San Antonio, and Friendship House in Harlem, an early influence on Thomas Merton.[3]

Communities Organized for Public Service

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Communities Organized for Public Service (**COPS**) is a coalition of non-partisan, grassroots community pressure groups based in San Antonio, Texas.[1][2][3][4][5][6] It is an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), a group dedicated to grassroots community organizing that was developed by Saul Alinsky in Chicago during the 1930s. Founded in 1974, COPS' mission is to secure specific, concrete standard of living improvements for neighborhoods traditionally neglected by city leaders through relational organizing.[7]

Though advocating primarily for the interests of lower-middle class and working class Mexican-Americans on the city's west and south sides, COPS avoids the label of civil rights organization, instead projecting itself as an agent for fair and equitable distribution of city resources and services. The COPS organization included many Catholic clergy, as well as many women determined to improve their communities and opportunities for their children. COPS success in this endeavor to date is remarkable, amounting to over one billion dollars in group-sponsored projects and initiatives.[8]

Young Christian Workers

14 languages

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The **Young Christian Workers** (**YCW**; French: *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne*) is an international organization founded by Rev. Joseph Cardijn in Belgium as the Young Trade Unionists; the organization adopted its present name in 1924. Its French acronym, **JOC**, gave rise to the then widely used terms *Jocism* and *Jocist*. In 1925, the JOC received Papal approbation, and in 1926 spread to France and eventually to 48 countries.

YCW in the past [edit]

JOC Quebec in 1939

Cardijn blamed the death of his father, a mineworker, on harsh labor conditions. Working-class Belgians of the era tended to see the Church as serving the interests of the aristocracy, and some old friends considered Cardijn a traitor; he thus decided to devote his career to "reconciling his Church with the industrial workers of the world."[1] When Cardijn was first made an assistant priest in the Brussels suburb Royal Laeken in 1912, he began to work with factory workers. In 1915, he became the director of the city's Catholic social work. In the years after the First World War, he began to organize young Catholic workers in the Brussels area to evangelize their colleagues; the group was named Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne. Its teachings were based on labor encyclicals by Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI. It received approval from Pius XI in 1925.[2]

Time Magazine, reporting on a Paris rally with 75,000 members in 1938, quoted Cardijn as telling his followers, "Every Jocist has a Divine mission from God, second only to that of the priest, to bring the whole world to Christ."[3]

Cardijn devoted the rest of his life to the movement, and in 1957 the JOC held its first world council in Rome. Cardijn served as an advisor to Vatican II and was made a Cardinal in 1965.[*citation needed*]

In England, the first section of the YCW was set up by Father Gerrard Rimmer in February 1937 at St Joseph's RC Church in Wigan, Lancashire.[4] Accompanied by parishioners Jim Tickle, Tommy Sullivan, Larry Sharkey, Pat Keegan, Jim O'Brien, and Frank Foster, Fr Rimmer travelled to Belgium to visit Cardinal Cardijn in the same year. Pat Keegan would go on to become the first International Young Christian Workers President in 1945, a post he held until 1957. He then took the role of Secretary General at the World Movement of Christian Workers.[5]

Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne

2 languages

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Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne (**JEC**) is a worldwide group of young Christian students. The movement also goes by the name YCS (Young Christian Students) in English or JEC (Juventud Estudiantil Catolica) in Spanish.

History [edit]

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Created 1929 in France, as part of the Catholic social movement, the JEC was formed by students from the ACJF (Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française) wishing to minister to other catholic students. The movement organised specialist branches. In 1935 the JEC, opposed fascism and Nazism and grew rapidly, in 1936, their first national convention had 4000 participants.

JEC movement grew in the spirit of the Specialized Catholic Action movements that were inspired by Joseph Cardijn (the founder of the Young Christian Workers) with the methodology of See-Judge-Act.

The JEC was a significant operator in the French resistance during World War II and continued to play a role in French political life until the 1960s. JEC members included numerous members of the resistance, politicians, media and university people, among them: Jacques Delors, Pascal Lamy, Joseph Fontanet, Gilbert Dru, Pierre Alviset, René Rémond, André de Péretti, Patrick Viveret, Pierre Rosanvallon, Geneviève Latreille [fr], Antoine Spire, Jean-Pierre Sueur, Georges Montaron, Christophe Hondelatte, Claude-François Jullien, Roger-Henri Guerrand, Renaud Sainsaulieu, Jean-Marie Vincent, Jean-Yves Le Drian, and Jacques Bugnicourt.

In the 1960s the JEC denounced torture and the French government's fighting against Algerian independence; this caused tensions with the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in France. As a result, in 1965, the Church removed its mandate from the association. This engagement with the church lead to schism within the JEC, which lasted until the reconstruction in the 1980s.

Friendship House

1 language

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Summary [edit]

Friendship House was a Catholic apostolate serving the poor, founded in Toronto in 1934 by Russian-born Catholic lay leader Catherine de Hueck. After its closure in 1936, de Hueck moved to Harlem, where others again joined her—living among the black community, responding to the needs they encountered, and challenging the racial discrimination of the times. The movement spread to Chicago and other American cities.[1] In 1947 Catherine de Hueck withdrew from active participation. In the 60s and 70s, the focus gradually shifted from social work to interracial justice and social action.[2] Friendship House in Harlem closed in 1960 and the Chicago branch, in 2000.[3]

So we can clearly see that “Catholic Action” organizations attract leftist and liberal minded individuals, and partook in resisting Catholic Governments such as the Vichy French regime.

So, bearing in mind that multiple Catholic Action organizations have been susceptible to leftism, is it not out of possibility that Azione Cattolica in Italy too was infiltrated by leftist social cause sympathizers? Catholic Action groups were originally founded to prevent Catholics from becoming communists, yet we see a trend of social leftist and progressive undercurrents within these organizations.

Lets examine now the Italian Wikipedia for Azione Cattolica.

Mussolini, now consolidated its power on April 9th 1928 had decreed the dissolution of all associations that had not been fascist. Hence the clash with the Vatican, which did not accept the dissolution of the circles of Catholic Action, "pupil of the eyes" of the pope. Mussolini was forced, so as not to compromise the stability of the concordat building of the Lateran pacts, to back off and to exclude Catholic Action from the ban. Article 43 of the agreed in fact, he had officially recognized Catholic Action on condition that it carried out its activity outside each party, to the dependence of the Church and to spread Catholic principles. It was an article that both sides had accepted with many reservations and many suspicions, each thinking of the after: fascism to his National Opera Balilla and the "battery" breeding of the new levers, as happens in all dictatorships; there Catholic Church taking care of his pastoral commitment which favors the spiritual and religious aspect, but does not exclude commitment and social responsibility.

So we see here that Catholic Action was indeed tolerated by Mussolini and Fascist Italy so long as it did not engage in activities outside of it’s domain. Later in the Italian Wikipedia, it contradicts itself and claims the encyclical was a condemnation of fascism, but then it says the encyclical proclaims loyalty to the Duce. We also find that Azione Cattolica was actually allowed to keep existing in the regime with an agreement reached on september 2nd almost 2 months after the encyclical released.

Throughout the month, the violence continues and worries even Mussolini who must recommend careful vigilance to the prefects so that accidents that offend popular religious sentiment do not happen. There was a heated protest on the Vatican side and in response Mussolini prudently closes the headquarters of all the circles of Catholic youth and all the university federations. The dissolution decree is dated May 29, 1931. The last three days of May record the seizure of all Catholic circles by the police. In this climate of heated tension (Catholic Action is attributed to also holding conspiracy meetings), in early July it comes out, but it is dated June 29, the'encyclical *We don't need* which remains the fundamental document for defining the pope's position and judgment towards that regime. Pius XI with this text explicitly condemns fascism as a totalitarian doctrine, defining it « a real pagan statolatry, no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than with the supernatural rights of the Church ... a program that misunderstands, fights and persecutes Catholic Action, which is to say how much the Church and its Head are notoriously more expensive and precious ». The encyclical also declares the oath of allegiance to duce.

It is from this period, the message that, through Father Pietro Tacchi Venturi, the Jesuit who kept the contacts between the Vatican and the Duce, Pius XI sent to Mussolini and in which the pope asserted in no uncertain terms that he had now acquired the certainty that the programs, Fascist statements and principles were at odds with the Catholic conscience and stated verbatim that « should go to the explicit disapproval of principles that are at odds with the doctrine and rights of the Church ». This statement is all the more relevant as it is dated July 24, that is, following the encyclical *We don't need it*. So Pius XI had come to the belief that marriage was impossible between fascism and the Church.

The subsequent agreement of September 2 established that:

1. the AC is diocesan, it depends on the bishops who choose the leaders;
2. it does not have professional and trade union groups because it only proposes religious objectives and trains young people to spirituality;
3. youth clubs will be called "AC Associations" and will refrain from athletic and sporting activities.

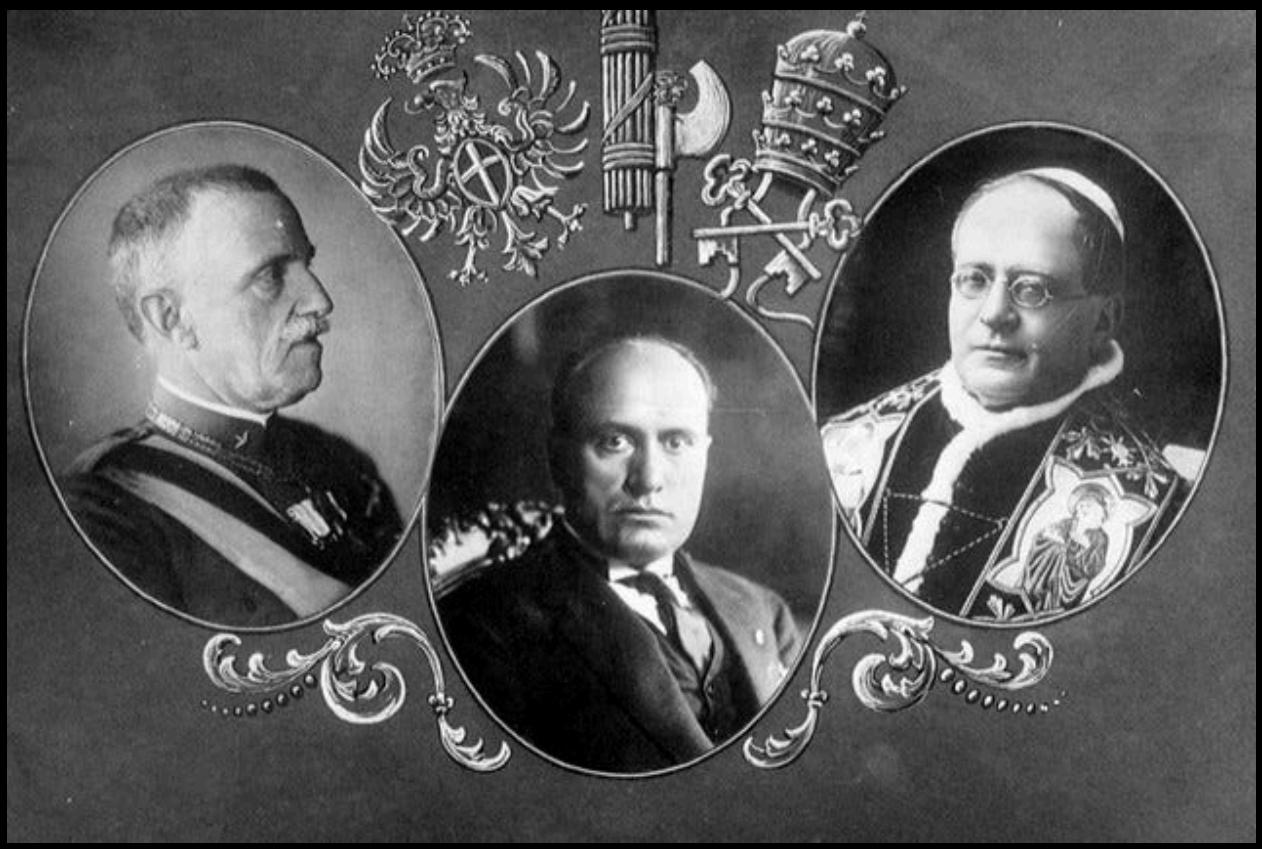
But the AC, although forced into a grim and repressed life, survived, strengthened and was able to prepare the paintings of the future Christian democracy.

In 1931 the Italian Catholic Youth Society (SGCI) becomes the Italian Youth of Catholic Action (GIAC). To the president Angelo Jervolino will happen in 1934 Luigi Gedda who will lead the youth association to 1946.

So as we can see, Azione Cattolica was allowed to keep operating and stay open so long as it stayed within it’s area of responsibility, but despite this, we see that there are undertones of “Christian Democracy” which is liberalist nonsense. So it turns

out, the repression of "Catholic Action” either was exaggerated or did not last long and was resolved with a subsequent agreement after the encyclical, thus rendering it’s effect useless and fulfilled.

So much for that “Condemnation”



So we can clearly see that this encyclical wasn’t a condemnation of Fascism, and that the issue with Catholic Action was resolved after it was released. Catholics should be more wary if they want to try to quote this encyclical as a condemnation of Fascism or the Fascist/NS/Third Positionist worldview. This article is not meant to be about Fascism’s total compatibility with Catholicism, but it certainly is compatible when you read the Fascist literature of the time and view its doctrines towards Religion. The Fascist Regime put the Church in the highest place of honor and respect than the previous regime in Italy. It had made Catholicism the State Religion, it imposed Catholic Prayer and Public practice of the faith onto society, it gave religious instruction in schools and youth groups, and it signed the Lateran Treaty with the Vatican, thus solving the problem with the unification and reconciling it with the church.

Pray for the Catholic Church and her Faithful Departed. Love your neighbor as yourself, and seek penance and the sacraments. Pray for the conversion of all souls,

especially the enemies of the Church, the Jews, Communists, and Freemasons. Stay devoted to the Holy Rosary.

Your friend as always, for the Greater Glory of God, Kreuzfahrer.

Sources + Extra Reading Material

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